Mats Alvesson

Organization Theory and Technocratic Consciousness

Rationality, Ideology and Quality of Work

Walter de Gruyter
Berlin · New York 1987

Contents

0. Introduction 1
0.1 Problems 1
0.2 The Structure of the Book 4

1. Metatheoretical and Methodological Points of Departure 7
1.1 Critical Theory I: The Frankfurt School 7
1.2 Critical Theory II: The Radical Humanist Paradigm 15
1.3 Critical Organization Theory According to Burrell and Morgan 19
1.4 Critical Sociology According to J. Israel 20
1.5 The Author's Approach and Method 21
1.6 The Critical Approach and Empirical/Analytical Knowledge 26
1.7 Some Problems With the Approach 28

2. Work Conditions in Modern Society 31
2.1 Braverman's Thesis 31
2.2 Some Results of Investigations of Swedish Working Life . . . 33
2.3 Research on Qualification/Dequalification 37
2.4 Braverman and Simon 43
2.5 Criticism of Braverman 45
2.6 Conclusion 50

3. The Importance of Work to the Individual 55
3.1 The Concept of Mental Health 55
3.2 Job Conditions and Mental Health 57
3.3 The Importance of the Organization 62
3.4 Mental and Physical Health 63
3.5 Other Effects: The Complexity of Work and Intellectual Development 64
3.6 Work Situation and Life Situation 65
3.7 Job Satisfaction and Other Influences of Work 68
3.8 Digression: A Critical Reflection 69

4. Personality, Adjustment and Work Organization 73
4.1 On General Statements on Personality in Organization Theory 73
4.2 To Be or to Become 75
4.3 Self-actualization in the Relational Sense 76
4.4 Adjustment and the Influence on the Personality 78

4.5 Adjustment to Unqualified Working Conditions 79
4.6 Summery 82

5. Job Satisfaction, Motivation and Meaning of Work 85
5.1 The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Motivation 86
5.2 Humanistic and Behaviouristic Motivation Psychology 90
5.3 On the Importance of Self-actualization 94
5.4 An Integrated Theory of Motivation 96
5.5 The Impoverishment of Working Life and Problems of Motivation 99
5.6 Reflections 104

6. Theories of Organization and Work Conditions 109
6.1 Scientific Management 110
6.2 Modern Human Relations 112
6.3 Organizational Development 115
6.4 Sociotechnics 117
6.5 Organizational Culture 123
6.6 An Apparent Contradiction 129
6.7 Different Organization Theories for Different Jobs and Different Functions 133
6.8 The Design of Work Organization and the Organizational Hierarchy 137
6.9 Resistence to the Humanization of Work 139
6.10 Summary 140

7. Organization Theory and Ideology 143
7.1 Ideology 144
7.2 Ideology and Theory 153
7.3 Management Ideology 156
7.4 The Relationship between Organization Theory and Ideology 163
7.5 Organization Theory and Ideology: Some Examples 171
7.6 Pluralist Organization Theory 178
7.7 Discussion 182

8. Organizations, Culture and Ideology 187
8.1 Increased Need of Ideology? 188
8.2 Theories as Ideological Responses to Problems in the Development of Society 193
8.3 Organizational Culture in the Societal Context 199
8.4 Organizational Culture as Ideology: Preoccupation With Social Integration 201
8.5 Organizational Culture as Ideology: Some Examples 206
8.6 Discussion 215

9. Working Life and Technological Rationality 219
9.1 A Working Life Which Causes Sickness? 220
9.2 The Problem of Rationality 224
9.3 Marcuse, Habermas and Technological Rationality 226
9.4 Working Life Research as Critique of Technological Rationality 230
9.5 Organization Theory as the Defence of Technological Rationality 233
9.6 Can a Society be Better Than Its Working Life? 238

10. A Critical Framework for Organizational Analysis 241
10.1 Some Examples of Critical Approaches in Organization Theory 242
10.2 Six Theses for a Critical Organization Theory 245
10.3 Brief Summery: Organizational Outputs of the Prevailing Rationality 257
10.4 Concluding Comments 259

References 263

Author Index 277

Subject Index 281